

For publication/broadcast on July 4, 2006

**AMBASSADOR BUTENIS' MESSAGE ON THE
OCCASION OF FOURTH OF JULY**

DHAKA, JUNE 29 -- Following is the text of remarks by Ambassador Patricia Butenis on the occasion of Fourth of July, America's Independence Day:

(begin text)

As many of you know, July 4th is America's Independence Day. Much as Bangladeshis all over the world gather on March 26 to celebrate their declaration of independence from Pakistan, Americans gather on July 4th to celebrate our declaration of independence from Great Britain.

This year we will be celebrating the 230th Anniversary of American independence on July 4th. On July 4, 1776, representatives of the 13 American colonies signed the Declaration of Independence, declaring their separation from Great Britain and affirming the then radical conviction that all men are created equal and endowed with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That document is the foundation of the democracy that Americans still enjoy today.

Bangladesh and America are bound by more than just wars of independence from repressive regimes; we are bound by a belief in the rights of the individual, the rights to free speech, freedom of religion and free press, and a dedication to the fundamental principles of democracy. America proudly stands with Bangladesh in our continuing commitment to keep and strengthen our hard-won democracies.

With the upcoming election in Bangladesh, it is more important than ever that Bangladesh keep constant watch against threats to the fundamentals of democracy. All of us, Americans and Bangladeshis, must remember that democracy cannot be taken for granted.

We hope Bangladeshis will join Americans around the world in celebrating our friendship and celebrating America's democracy on July 4.

=====

GR/ 2006

Note: *A Bangla translation of this article is also available from the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section (Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>*